

**Introduced by Senator Alarcon**

February 22, 2005

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An act to add Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 32315) to Chapter 3 of Part 19 of the Education Code, relating to public postsecondary education.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 635, as introduced, Alarcon. Public postsecondary education: education empowerment zones.

Existing law establishes the public postsecondary education system of the state, which consists of 3 segments: the University of California, which is administered by the Regents of the University of California; the California State University, which is administered by the Trustees of the California State University; and the California Community Colleges, which is administered by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.

This bill would require the Trustees of the California State University, the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, the Student Aid Commission, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Secretary for Education, and would request the Regents of the University of California, to jointly establish the Education Empowerment Zone Authority.

The bill would authorize the authority to designate various areas around the state as education empowerment zones. The bill would also authorize the designation of these zones by a joint task force that the educational entities listed above would be authorized to establish.

The bill would specify the criteria for the establishment of these zones, and would require the authority to establish education empowerment zones in prescribed areas of the state.

The bill would authorize the regents to grant preferences in undergraduate, graduate, and professional school admissions, to the full extent permitted by the United States and California Constitutions, to pupils and graduates of schools located in education empowerment zones. The bill would authorize the trustees to use existing retention and graduation programs to ensure that students from education empowerment zones who attend institutions within the California State University system remain in good standing and graduate in a timely manner.

The bill would authorize the authority, as well as the educational entities that are required under the bill to establish the authority, to work with school districts, community college districts, county offices of education, cities, counties, and other local governmental entities for the purposes of the bill.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 32315) is  
2 added to Chapter 3 of Part 19 of the Education Code, to read:

3  
4 Article 2.5. Education Empowerment Zones  
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6 32315. It is the intent of the Legislature to accomplish both of  
7 the following:

8 (a) To increase the economic development of all communities  
9 through more focused educational investment.

10 (b) In order to achieve the goal set forth in subdivision (a), to  
11 authorize the establishment of education empowerment zones.

12 32315.3. (a) An education empowerment zone established  
13 under this article shall have each of the following functions:

14 (1) Improvement of economic development within the zone.

15 (2) Closing the education achievement gap of pupils from  
16 schools within the zone.

17 (3) Increasing the graduation rates of pupils from high schools  
18 within the zone.

19 (4) Increasing the education and training level of pupils from  
20 high schools within the zone.

1 (5) Attracting businesses to invest in schools located within  
2 the zone.

3 (6) Increasing the University of California and California State  
4 University admission rates for students within the zone.

5 (7) Attracting qualified teachers to the zone, focusing on  
6 mathematics and science teachers.

7 (8) Building partnerships focused on education and economic  
8 development.

9 (b) The Trustees of the California State University, the Board  
10 of Governors of the California Community Colleges, the Student  
11 Aid Commission, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and  
12 Secretary for Education shall, and the Regents of the University  
13 of California are requested to, either through the establishment of  
14 a joint task force or acting collaboratively through their  
15 participation in the Education Empowerment Zone Authority,  
16 designate various areas around the state as education  
17 empowerment zones.

18 32315.5. (a) The Trustees of the California State University,  
19 the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges,  
20 the Student Aid Commission, the Superintendent of Public  
21 Instruction, and Secretary for Education shall, and the Regents of  
22 the University of California are requested to, jointly establish the  
23 Education Empowerment Zone Authority.

24 (b) The authority shall apply all of the following criteria when  
25 designating an area as an education empowerment zone:

26 (1) Each zone shall include at least two public high schools  
27 and at least three public middle or junior high schools.

28 (2) The public high schools in each zone shall have graduation  
29 rates of less than 50 percent.

30 (3) More than 50 percent of the pupils in the public schools of  
31 each zone shall be eligible for free or reduced price lunch  
32 programs.

33 (4) The rate of the participation of the graduates of each of the  
34 zone's public high schools with respect to either postsecondary  
35 career technical training programs or four-year public  
36 postsecondary institutions shall be below the state average.

37 (5) As determined by the Department of Finance, the  
38 unemployment rate within the zone exceeds the statewide  
39 unemployment rate.

1 (6) As determined by the Department of Justice, the level of  
2 criminal activity within the zone exceeds the statewide level of  
3 criminal activity.

4 (c) The authority shall ensure that, at a minimum, education  
5 empowerment zones are established in each of the following  
6 areas of the state:

7 (1) The Central Valley.

8 (2) The Imperial Valley.

9 (3) The County of Los Angeles.

10 (4) The San Francisco Bay Area.

11 (5) Northern California, excluding the San Francisco Bay  
12 Area.

13 (6) The eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

14 (d) The governing body or executive officer of a school  
15 district, county office of education, community college district,  
16 city, county, city and county, or any other local governmental  
17 entity may nominate to the authority an area or areas for  
18 consideration for designation as an education empowerment  
19 zone.

20 32315.7. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law:

21 (1) The Regents of the University of California may, to the full  
22 extent permitted by pertinent provisions of the United States and  
23 California Constitutions, grant preference in undergraduate,  
24 graduate, and professional school admissions to a pupil or  
25 graduate of a public or private high school located within an  
26 education empowerment zone.

27 (2) The Regents of the University of California may, to the  
28 extent permitted by pertinent provisions of the United States and  
29 California Constitutions, guarantee admission to any pupil or  
30 graduate of a public high school located within an education  
31 empowerment zone who graduates, or has graduated, in the top 9  
32 percent of his or her graduating class.

33 (3) The Trustees of the California State University (CSU) may  
34 use existing retention and graduation programs to ensure that  
35 students from education empowerment zones who attend  
36 institutions within the CSU system remain in good standing and  
37 graduate in a timely manner.

38 (4) The Regents of the University of California, the Trustees  
39 of the California State University, the Board of Governors of the  
40 California Community Colleges, the Superintendent of Public

1 Instruction, the Secretary for Education, and the governing  
2 bodies or executive officers of school districts, community  
3 college districts, and county offices of education are authorized  
4 to collaborate on academic enrichment, retention, and graduation  
5 programs to ensure that the goals of this article are met.

6 (b) The authority may work with school districts, community  
7 college districts, county offices of education, cities, counties, a  
8 city and county, or any other local governmental entities to  
9 ensure that the goals of this article are met.